



BRIEFS

SOUTHEASTERN GOLF EARNS CERTIFICATION

TIFTON, Ga. — Full-service golf course construction company Southeastern Golf Inc. has earned professional certification from the Golf Course Builders Association of America (GCBA). The program, established in 1992, identifies competent and experienced golf course builders and ensures uniform quality standards within the industry. Certified builders must be in the golf business at least five years, provide professional and financial references, attend one GCBA education session annually, pass a written exam and engage in ethical business practices.

NUGENT TO OPEN TWO PUBLIC COURSES IN ILLINOIS

LONG GROVE, Ill. — Nugent Golf Associates is preparing to open two new public courses in the Chicago area this summer. Construction was recently completed on the Foxford Hills Country Club in Cary, Ill., which has been turned over to GolfVisions to manage. The design for each hole at the Legends, located in Bensenville, was inspired by holes from notable American courses.

ASGCA OFFERS REMODELING BROCHURE

CHICAGO — The American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) is offering a free brochure titled *Remodeling Your Golf Course* to assist golf course owners, managers, superintendents, greens committees and anyone who may be planning a remodeling project. The booklet covers areas to consider in a remodeling project, including advice on drafting a remodeling master plan and costs, funding and other factors relating to construction. Copies can be ordered online at www.asgca.org.

LAKE KEOWEE COURSE TO OPEN ON SCHEDULE

SUNSET, S.C. — The Jack Nicklaus Signature course at The Reserve at Lake Keowee is currently undergoing construction, which began in 2001, and is on schedule to open Oct. 15. David Heatwole, a senior design associate at Nicklaus Design, will oversee the final implementation of the construction plan. The course is part of a 3,200-acre community with more than 23 miles of shoreline on Lake Keowee.

Continuity leads to consistency during club's reconstruction

Editor's note: This article is the first in a series that addresses the long-range planning and implementation of a reconstruction program at Willoughby Golf Club in Stuart, Fla. The course is an 18-hole residential facility that was owned and operated by a development company and then turned over to the membership after 10 years. The membership has now operated the facility for more than four years but the long-range planning began a few years prior to the takeover. Kevin Downing, CGCS, has been the golf course and landscape manager since the inception of the project and provides valuable insight into initiating their long-range plans.

By KEVIN DOWNING

STUART, Fla. — As Willoughby Golf Club embarks in a full-scale renovation project that will involve closing the course for the next six months, proper long-range planning has been a key organizational advantage. I have headed up the renovation planning process, which began in 1998. Since I have been at the club from the beginning, I have been able to easily identify what steps need to be taken to improve the layout



Kevin Downing, CGCS

because I understand the course's mission. In the late 1980s the developers of Willoughby set out to create a golf course that focused on the needs of the average golfer. They wanted to create a stimulating round of golf, but realized that most of the buyers were high-handicap golfers.

The developers originally chose the Arthur Hills design firm because of their ability to work with environmentally sensitive property and because they understood the diverse needs of the eventual homeowners and club membership. I worked closely with their firm and the housing configuration to insure that the course hit the targeted market. The result was a 6,600-yard course that still challenged all levels of golfers.

As courses mature, the design characteristics and landscape materials can alter the playing conditions of the best of

Continued on next page

Golf Trail looking for first site

By DEREK RICE

SAN FRANCISCO — Unlike most of the country, the San Francisco Bay area doesn't have enough golf courses. With land scarce, it's difficult to find 150 acres to build on, which means that the daily-fee courses are packed.

Because he doesn't have the time to play at a crowded course, Dwight Pate got to thinking about golf facilities that could be built on less land.

"I started thinking that the whole business of 150 acres in the design of



Dwight Pate says this is the optimal layout for his Golf Trail.

golf courses is dependent on the sanctity of par," he said. "Rather than the sanctity of par, why don't we just create shots. Suddenly the land requirement is about a third. That was the basis of the Golf Trail concept."

Golf Trail is the combination of a golf course and a practice facility. Golfers use standard equipment to hit operator-supplied

balls to target greens and fairways. Players can add a competitive component

Continued on page 20

Twin Creeks project progressing

By DEREK RICE

AUSTIN, Texas — Twin Creeks, a 760-acre residential, country club and golf course community located in the Cedar Park area of Austin, will be the first private country club and the first Fred Couples signature course in the area when it opens this fall.

The project is a venture of Twin Creeks Holdings, a partnership between Crescent Resources LLC and SWD Communities. The development, undertaken by Weitz Golf International of Palm Beach, Fla., broke ground last October and is progressing on schedule, said Harry Turner, senior vice president of Twin Creeks Holdings.

"We're currently in construction with a planned opening of late this year," he said. "We hope to have everything planted by the end of August and I believe that we should meet that as long as we don't get

any big rains or anything that's unforeseen."

One reason the project is going so well, Turner said, is the land itself, which he said is attractive to both golfers and homeowners.

"We've got a perfect piece of land. We've got 15 holes that don't have houses directly on the fairway so from a golfer's perspective it gives you the feel of not being in a housing development," he said. "From

Continued on page 19

UK alum returns for renovation

By DEREK RICE

LEXINGTON, Ky. — When architect Drew Rogers of Arthur Hills/Steve Forrest and Associates graduated from the University of Kentucky in 1991, he never imagined that he'd one day be back to help renovate the Big Blue course at the University Club of Kentucky.

"When you leave school, you never know where your career is going to take you," Rogers said. "Certainly, I didn't have any idea that I'd ever have an opportunity to come back and be in Lexington to do the kind of work that I do, so that was pretty rewarding."



Drew Rogers

The course, which is set to reopen May 18, has undergone what Rogers called a "typical facelift," including rebuilding greens to USGA specifications and renovating tee boxes, bunkers, drainage and cart paths. Along with these traditional items, Rogers was able to bring the course more in line with its Kentucky roots.

"A lot of vegetation that was on the site that was probably not selected to match the pastoral quality of the site, so we removed a lot of

Continued on page 17

Course to open on donated land

By DEREK RICE

BATON ROUGE, La. — Thanks to a donation of 200 acres of land and a property tax levy that raised \$3.2 million, the East Baton Rouge Parish Recreation and Parks Commission (BREC) will soon open a new flagship golf course, its seventh in the area.

Although there is no set date for the opening of Beaver Creek, Bill Palmer, BREC director, said conditions should dictate a summer opening.

"We don't have a target date except for somewhere around July or August," he said. It's growing in and doing very well. It's been a kind winter and the grass really looks good."

A group of landowners donated the land in 1999, keeping 322 acres for a residential community that is also under construction.

"The land is worth about 2.5 million. That's a very significant donation," Palmer said.

Because BREC and the developers have worked together from the start, the two projects will avoid many of the issues encountered by such close neighbors, Palmer said.

"We eliminated a lot of the potential problems by working together in the be-

Continued on page 19

Designer tackles ownership

Continued from previous page

and at press time, the firm was waiting for the snow to melt so seeding could begin, Schick-Puddicombe said.

"We have way too much snow at the moment, so we need to get rid of the snow and then we'll be doing the grow-in this summer," she said. "We're

not sodding. Everything will be planted by seed. We'll just be growing it in and cleaning it up, putting cart paths in and some of the final details."

Depending on how the grow-in progresses, Schick-Puddicombe said, the course might open for limited play later this year. As far as staffing is

concerned, the club has hired a superintendent, but could not divulge his name because he hadn't yet given notice at his prior job.

"We're excited to have him on board," Schick-Puddicombe said. "He'll bring a lot of knowledge and experience and energy into the project."

The plan is to hire a general manager sometime this summer,

but that plan could be accelerated if there is to be play on the course this year.

"It really depends on what happens this year because if we do have a little bit of limited play this year, we'll obviously have to hire some people on just to get that going," Schick-Puddicombe said.

RedTail's clubhouse is scheduled to break ground this month. ■

Golf Trail

Continued from page 15

to the trail as well. The most land-efficient layout for the site is a circle within a square, but Pate said that design isn't absolute.

"Depending on the terrain, it could be linear or it could take on different shapes. It's easy to do on a flat site," he said "It will fit into all kinds of equations, whether it's a business park or residential development or a freestanding one on unused public land."

While no facility has been built yet, Pate said he has some sites that are close.

"The one that seems like it might go first is located in SeaTac, which is the big airport area for Seattle," he said. "There's a half of a park that hasn't been developed that was granted to the city of SeaTac by the FAA. It's a neat place, about 6,000 hotel rooms within a mile. I like that site a lot, and we're grinding through, working with the FAA and the port of Seattle."

Pate said Economic Research Associates did an economic study for his firm in Seattle and found that Golf Trail is much more efficient than a typical nine-hole course.

"They showed that the nine-hole course could make about \$1 million (net operating income on an annual basis) running at about 80 percent capacity. Then they showed how the Golf Trail would make \$1 million operating at 20 percent capacity," he said.

Pate also pointed to Sportometrics research that suggests that alternative facilities and traditional courses can peacefully coexist.

"These alternative facilities or whatever they are seem to thrive in and around other golf courses and they don't cannibalize each other, which would suggest that alternative facilities is a growth sector for the golf industry," he said. "It's becoming more and more apparent that the golf courses are overbuilt, particularly these high-end daily fees. There's going to be a lot of blood spilled in the next year or two."

Pate said he looks forward to identifying and building the first of his designs, whether that is in SeaTac or somewhere else. He's also cautious, knowing that previous plans, such as a course conversion in Honolulu, have encountered problems.

"I'm principally looking for locations now," he said. "The first one is going to be critical, so I need to identify that. I might get stymied at any site." ■



Landscape architecture by Toscanini.

Ornamentals by Monrovia.

Turf by Confront.

To create a landscaping masterpiece, you need the best of everything. Like Confront herbicide, from Dow AgroSciences. Confront provides spectacular control of dandelion, clover, chickweed and other tough broadleaf species for up to 12 weeks. So your turf is as beautiful as possible, your customers, as happy as possible. Confront.  When only the best will do.

Confront
Specialty Herbicide

www.dowagro.com/turf 1-800-255-3726 Always read and follow label directions. *Trademark of Dow AgroSciences LLC